

**Patent Application of**

**David G. Hunter**

**for**

**TITLE: BUBBLE GREETING CARD**

**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS    Not Applicable**

**FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH    Not Applicable**

**SEQUENCE LISTING OR PROGRAM    Not Applicable**

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION—FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

**This invention relates to greeting cards.**

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

**[0001] Greeting cards serve to convey a sentiment from the sender of the card to the recipient. Further, greeting cards provide gratification to the sender when they feel that the sentiment they wish to express has been conveyed effectively.**

[0002] A multitude of types of greetings card have been produced incorporating features intended to satisfy these functions. Generally cards incorporate: space in which the sender may write a message to the recipient, and preprinted messages and or pictures. The overall design of the card, the pictures, and the preprinted message are formulated so as to appeal to the sender and to the recipient.

[0003] Common techniques used to generate appeal include: a pleasing appearance to the card, decorative features, amusing pictures, amusing and or sincere preprinted messages.

[0004] Some cards employ additional measures to further their appeal. A “pop-up” art card is taught by U. S. Patent No. 3,235,988 issued to Richard E. Paige (1966). The three dimensional nature of the images adds novelty to the cards but the novelty generally short lived and the pop-up features are susceptible to damage.

[0005] Some cards seek to improve appeal by incorporating features to provide an activity to the recipient. A card incorporating a puzzle message is proposed by U. S. Patent No. 5,261,703 issued to Roger J. Lenkoff (1992). While some recipients might enjoy completing such a puzzle other people do not enjoy puzzles or may not solve the puzzle thereby failing to receive the complete message from the sender.

[0006] Other cards incorporate a small gift such as a stained glass ornament proposed by U. S. Patent No. 6,230,425 issued to Sandra K. Ellison (2001). Incorporating a gift often adds considerable cost, potentially many times the cost of the card alone.

[0007] Prior art of other fields teaches the popping of bubbles in material such as bubble wrap as an activity.

[0008] U. S. Patent No. 4,378,391 issued to Michael L. Allen (1983), proposes an advertising novelty in the form of a napkin that employs the activity of popping strips of bubbles to focus attention on an advertising message.

[0009] U. S. Patent No. 5,484,318 issued to Todd M. Mayert and Curtis Mayert (1996), and U. S. Patent No. 4,911,671 issued to Buddy L. Rodgers (1990), use the activity of popping bubbles to relieve stress.

[0010] U. S. Patent No. 6,348,248 issued to Christine Randolph (2002), teaches a party favor incorporating bubble wrap type material to make a popping noise.

[0011] Although employing bubble wrap type material this prior art does not attempt to address the objectives of greeting cards. Further, the prior art fails to anticipate the improvements that are achieved in the field of greeting cards by the current invention.

#### OBJECTS AND ADVANTAGES

[0012] Cellular bubble material such as bubble wrap is incorporated into the construction of a greeting card as an element of the drawings, images and or text. Popping the cells of bubble wrap is found by many people to be a compelling activity. By incorporating cellular bubble material into the construction of a greeting card this invention enhances the novelty of the drawings, images and or text and provides an amusing and relaxing activity for the recipient of the card. The pleasure and amusement that the recipient receives from popping the cells of the cellular bubble material serves as a gift from the sender, that increases the appeal of the card. The recipient will feel thought of, in that the sender selected a card that provides pleasure and amusement beyond the written message.

[0013] Many kinds of drawings and images can be enhanced by incorporation of the cellular bubble material. A single bubble can serve as a wart on the end of a witch’s nose. A plurality of bubbles can be incorporated as bubbles in a glass of champagne. Bubbles can be

incorporated into the flames on the candles of a birthday cake. Bubbles be incorporated into drawings or images as Easter eggs, ornaments on a Christmas tree, lumps on a dinosaur’s skin, stars in the sky, balloons, eyeballs, spots on the skin of an animal or a person, or as the dots in a polka dot pattern on clothing, to cite but a few examples. The bubbles can also be incorporated into the construction of the letters of the message as the dot on the letter “i” and as the circular portion of round letters like “o” and “p”. There are a multitude of possibilities for the incorporation of the bubbles into drawings, images and text.

[0014] The activity of popping the bubbles of the cellular bubble material can be incorporated into the message of many types of cards as an integral element of the message. Consider for example: “Thought I’d just pop this in the mail.”, “Why don’t you pop by? I miss you.”, “I hope you get your pop back soon”, (i.e. get well soon). ... The combination of the message and the popping function provides a basis for development of many witty, amusing and memorable messages, well beyond the few examples shown here.

[0015] The popping activity of cellular bubble material of this invention reinforces and more effectively conveys the sentiment of the sender. A “get well” card for example generally expresses the thought that the sender wants the recipient to feel better, and the pleasure of popping the bubbles contributes positively to that message. A card intended to be humorous reinforces that message by providing the amusement of the bubble popping activity and the bubbles can be incorporated into the drawings, images and or text on the card in a manner that makes the popping of the bubbles an integral element of the humor of the card.

[0016] As greeting cards are commonly disposed of not long after being received, it is beneficial for a greeting card to be of low cost. Since cellular bubble material such as bubble wrap is a low cost material its incorporation into a greeting card provides the benefits identified while enabling the greeting card to be produced inexpensively.

[0017] By being affixed in sufficient quantity to substantially cover a surface of the card the cellular bubble material serves to protect the card from damage due to handling or from

being mailed and will it protect an item placed inside the card. This feature avoids the need for a protective envelope since the card can be mailed in a regular envelope.

[0018] The cellular bubble material may be transparent, translucent or opaque, and colored as warranted to achieve a suitable effect for the drawing, image or text that it is an element of.

## SUMMARY

[0019] In accordance with the present invention this greeting card comprises a folded planar card stock to which is adhered a cellular bubble material as an integral element of the drawings, images or text on the card.

## DRAWINGS—FIGURES

Fig 1A shows a two-panel greeting card with cellular bubble material incorporated into a drawing on the outer surface.

Fig 1B shows the layers of material of a panel of the card.

Fig 2A shows a greeting card with cellular material affixed as a feature of a drawing on the inner surface of the card.

Fig 2B shows a detailed view of the cellular bubble material with an example text drawing pattern as could be employed in the card shown in Fig 2A.

Fig 3 shows a two-panel greeting card with cellular material affixed to an inner surface of the rear panel located so as to protrude through a cut out shape in the front panel of the card.

Fig 4A shows an alternative layer structure to the material of the greeting card.

Fig 4B shows a greeting card fabricated from material with the alternative layer structure shown in Fig 4A.

Fig 5 shows a second alternative layer structure for a panel of a card

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DRAWINGS –Reference numerals

10 cellular bubble material  
15 card stock  
20 top bubble layer of cellular bubble material  
25 bottom flat layer of cellular bubble material  
30 front surface cutouts  
35 card surface flat layer of cellular bubble material  
40 top card stock layer

DETAILED DESCRIPTION—FIG 1—PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0020] A preferred embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in Figure 1A (perspective view). The greeting card is comprised of a substantially flat piece of paper or card stock **15** folded so as to form two panels. Cellular bubble material **10** is adhered to the outer surface of the panels in selected locations so as to form an integral element of the drawing on the card. In the preferred embodiment both the outer and inner surface of the panels may have text and or pictures on them. In order to form a suitable element of the image, drawing or text on the card the cellular bubble material may be opaque or where it is desirable that the underlying drawing, image, color or text is visible through the material the cellular bubble material may be clear or translucent.

[0021] The layered structure of the preferred embodiment of the greeting card is illustrated in Figure 1B (cross-section). The outer bubble layer **20** of the cellular bubble material is affixed to the inner flat layer **25** of the cellular bubble material thereby trapping gas within the cells. The card stock **15** is affixed to the bottom of the inner flat layer of the cellular bubble material.

Figs 2-3-Additional Embodiments

[0022] Additional embodiments are shown in Figures 2, and 3. In Figure 2A (perspective view) the cellular bubble material affixed to an inner surface of the card. Two folds are

made in the card stock such that when the card is closed the section of card between the folds provides enough separation between the front and back panels to accommodate the thickness of the cellular bubble material that is affixed to the inner surface. The detailed view of the cellular bubble material, text and drawing pattern shown in Figure 2B (perspective view) illustrates a combination that can substantially cover a surface of a card.

[0023] In Figure 3 (perspective view) the cellular bubble material is adhered to a portion of the inner surface of the rear panel of the card and the front panel has cutouts **30** of similar shapes situated so as to allow the cellular bubble material to protrude through the front panel when the card is closed.

#### Fig 4 – Alternative Structure

[0024] The alternative layer structure is illustrated in Figure 4A (cross-section). In this embodiment the outer bubble layer **20** of the cellular bubble material is affixed directly to a substantially flat layer of material **35** that serves as the surface of the card. The exposed surface of the flat layer of material has a composition or coating that allows it to be written on. This embodiment allows the greeting card to be formed from the cellular bubble material resulting in a greeting card incorporating a plurality of bubbles as illustrated in Figure 4B (perspective view).

#### Fig 5 – Second Alternative Structure

[0025] Figure 5 (cross-section) illustrates how the cellular bubble material (comprised of the outer bubble layer **20** and the inner layer **25**) may be sandwiched between two layers of card stock (**15** and **40**). The top card stock layer **40** has holes in it of a size and placement that enable it to fit over the cellular bubble material such that the bubbles protrude through the holes. In this manner the top card stock layer **40** can cover the edges and border of the cellular bubble material and can conceal any gaps between pieces of cellular bubble material. Further the top card stock layer **40** serves to hold the cellular bubble material in place. During manufacture of the greeting card the top card stock layer **40** can additionally assist in alignment of the cellular bubble material to the drawings, images and or text on the card.

#### Conclusions Ramifications and Scope

[0026] Thus the reader will see that the current invention provides a highly appealing yet economical greeting card. This greeting card has many advantages: it serves to incorporate novel three dimensional features into the drawings, images and or text of the card, it provides the recipient with an enjoyable activity, the activity and the bubble features that provide the activity reinforce the intended message of the card, this makes the card seem more like a gift to the recipient, it enables the sentiment of the sender to be more effectively conveyed, it is composed of inexpensive materials, and where the cellular bubble material covers a substantial portion of the surface of the card it provides integral protection of the card and its contents against damage.

[0027] Although the description above has many specificities, these should not be construed as limitations on the scope of the invention, but rather as an exemplification of some of the currently preferred embodiments of this invention. For example the card can have shapes other than the rectangular forms illustrated. The number of panels and how they are folded can be varied. The greeting card can be adorned with any different colors, images, and text messages. The shapes of areas of the card that are covered by the cellular bubble material can take many forms. The panels can be formed of independent pieces of material that are attached along one or more edges. The bubbles of the cellular bubble material can be formed in many different shapes, and sizes.

[0028] Thus the scope of the invention should be determined by the appended claims and their legal equivalents, rather than by the examples given.